

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 09530 200848Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 HA-05 IO-13 ACDA-12
PA-01 ICA-11 /113 W
-----000479 201132Z /17

R 200530Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2320
DIA WASHDC
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
CINCPAC
13TH AF CLARK AFB PI

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 9530

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MORG, MPOL, IN
SUBJECT: INDIAN AIR FORCE LEVELS

REF: NEW DELHI 9435

1. (U) AT A NEWS CONFERENCE JUNE 17, PRIME MINISTER
DESAI REPLIED TO AN ATTACK BY FORMER PM INDIRA GANDHI
THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS WEAKENING THE IAF BY REDUCING
THE NUMBER OF STRIKE SQUADRONS FROM SEVEN TO FIVE (REF
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TEL). THE PRIME MINISTER DENIED THAT THIS MEANT A
REDUCTION AND ASSERTED THAT, " IT IS AN EQUIVALENT
STRENGHT". IA A JUNE 18 ARTICLE DISCUSSING THE PM'S
REMARKS (PRESUMABLE BASED UPON A BRIEFING FROM GOVERN-
MENT SOURCES) THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" STATED THAT "THE
OVERALL COMBAT STRENGHT" OF THE IAF WOULD REMAIN AT ABOUT
45 SQUADRONS, "THE NORMAL STRENGTH MAINTAINED BY INDIA

IN RECENT YEARS." THE PAPER CITES "OBSERVERS" AS
HAVING POINTED OUT THAT THE REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF
STRIKE SQUADRONS WOULD NOT "AFFECT THE OVERALL COMPOSI-
TION OF THE IAF."

2. COMMENT (CONF.) WHILE THE CLAIM THAT INDIA WAS
REDUCING ITS STRIKE FORCE PRESUMABLE WAS INTENDED TO
STRIKE A RESPONSIVE NOTE BY DESAI IN THE US, IT OBVIOUSLY
LAID HIM OPEN TO MRS. GANDHI'S ATTACK THAT HE WAS WEAKENING
THE NATIONAL DEFENSE. WE HAD CONCLUDED (REFTEL) THAT OVER
THE NEXT DECADE THE IAF WOULD CONTINUE TO HAVE 35 STRIKE-
CAPABLE SQUADRONS. THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" FIGURE OF 45
SQUADRONS FOR THE "OVERALL COMBAT STRENGTH" OF THE IAF
PRESUMABLE WOULD INCLUDE THE 35 SQUADRONS ENUMERATED
PARA 6 REFTEL PLUS TEN ADDITIONAL TRANSPORT SQUADRONS.
THE IMPORTANT POINT OF DESAI'S REMARKS AS AMPLIFIED BY
THE PRESS, CONFIRMING CONCLUSION OF REFTEL, IS THAT
VIEWED EITHER QUANTITATIVELY OR QUALITATIVELY THE STRENGTH
OF THE IAF IS NOT BEING REDUCED.
BLOOD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIR FORCE, FORCE & TROOP LEVELS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780640/aaaabiot.tel
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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TAGS: MORG, MPOL, IN
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